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## The Comet

THE comet has come and passed and the old planet called earth continues its steady roll on its axis, its steady sweep in its orbit. If, as the savants say, the wild wonder of the ether sought to lash the earth with its elongated narrative, the elastic atmosphere made a cushion to break and neutralize the blow, and the order of the universe was not changed by the sky-scraping visitor.

The sun and moon and the planets are all worlds; their goings and comings are perfectly read under the keys which science has discovered; the fixed stars are doubtless other suns with their families of planets and satellites, and it is but natural to suppose that in the economy of the Infinite, they are inhabited worlds; that as their physical structures are like that of this little earth on which we dwell, they are subject to the same laws and the same influences, and there is no reason why they should not, like our planet, be inhabited; that their inhabitants have their loves and hates, their ambitions, their strength and weaknesses, even as do the inhabitants of this world, and that the only differences are due to the measure of their enlightenment.

We of the earth have an idea that could we in a moment be transferred to Venus, for instance, our first inquiries would be: "Have you daily journals here and books? When was the art of printing discovered here? Have you steam engines, electric lights and wireless telegraphy? Is your time divided into moments, hours, weeks and months and years? Have you a St. Patrick's Day and Fourth of July? Are your people divided into different nationalities? Do you have wars at times, soldiers on land and fighting ships at sea? Have you rulers corresponding to our kings on the earth, or are you a great Democracy where the people rule? Have you schools and churches, and a Sabbath Day, and what God do you worship?"

It seems entirely natural that we should ask such questions and be understood, for the physical structure of Venus is precisely the same as that of our planet, and if there are people there, they must, like ours, live upon the fruits of the ground and the fishes of the seas.

But the comets are a different affair. Their substance is uncertain, their elaborate make-up is too fragile for any earthly use, at least, they do not seem to have any constituent parts that can be of any practical consequence. Are they the old-fashioned messengers to carry secret dispatches from world to world, by a code which only planets and suns can read? They have their regular patrols in the ether, else our astronomers could not calculate their comings and goings, but what is their object in the universe?

Of course, speculation is vain and the wings of the imagination flutter and fall in their flight to discover a possible reason for their existence. It may be they are the royal standards of the upper worlds, symbols of the power and majesty that governs creation and holds satellites, planets and suns in their spheres without a jar, as centuries come and go and age succeeds age, all moving under changeless laws. And, as we contemplate the wonder of it all, the stately ode of Derzhaven, in its splendor, comes back to memory like a solemn paean.

O Thou Eternal One! whose presence bright  
All space doth occupy—all motion guid  
Unchanged through Time's devastating flight,

Thou only God! There is no God beside,  
Being above all beings! Mighty One!  
Whom none can comprehend, and none explore;  
Who fill'st existence with Thyself alone;  
Embracing all—supporting—ruling o'er—  
Being whom we call God, and know no more!

In its sublime research, Philosophy  
May measure out the ocean deep—may count  
The sands or the sun's rays; but God! for Thee  
There is no weight nor measure; none can mount  
Up to Thy mysteries. Reason's brightest spark  
Though kindled by Thy light, in vain would try  
To trace Thy counsels, infinite and dark,  
And thought is lost ere thought can soar so high,  
E'en like past moments in Eternity.

Thou from primeval nothingness didst call  
First chaos, then existence. Lord, on Thee  
Eternity had its foundation; all  
Sprung forth from Thee; of light, joy, harmony,  
Sole origin—all, all beauty, Thine,  
Thy word created all, and doth create;  
Thy splendor fills all space with rays divine;  
Thou art, and wert, and shall be glorious, great!  
Light-giving, life-sustaining Potentate.

Thy claims the unmeasured universe surround.  
Upheld by Thee, by Thee inspired by breath!  
Thou the beginning with the end hath bound,  
And beautifully mingled Life and Death!  
As sparks mount upward from the fiery blaze,  
So suns are born, so worlds sprang forth from Thee!  
And as the spangles in the sunny rays  
Shine round the silver snow, the pageantry  
Of Heaven's bright army glitters in Thy praise.

A million torches, lighted by Thy hand,  
Wander unwearied through the blue abyss;  
They own Thy power, accomplish Thy command,  
All gay with light, all eloquent with bliss.  
What shall we call them? Piles of crystal light?  
A glorious company of golden streams,  
Lamps of celestial ether burning bright?  
Suns lighting systems with their joyous beams?  
But Thou to these are as the moon to night.

Yet as a drop of water in the sea,  
All this magnificence in Thee is lost;  
What are ten thousand worlds compared to Thee?  
And what am I, then? Heaven's unnumber'd host,  
Though multiplied by myriads and arrayed  
In all the glory of sublimest thought,  
Is but an atom in the balance, weighed  
Against Thy greatness—is a cypher brought  
Against Infinity! What am I, then? Naught.

Naught? But the effluence of Thy light divine,  
Pervading worlds, hath reached my bosom, too;  
Yes, in my spirit doth Thy spirit shine  
As shines the sunbeam in a drop of dew.  
Naught! But I live, and on Hope's pinions fly  
Eager toward Thy presence; for in Thee  
I live, and breathe, and dwell! aspiring high,  
E'en to the throne of Thy divinity!  
I am, O God, and sure! Thou must be!

Thou art directing, guiding all, Thou art!  
Direct my understanding, then, to Thee;

Control my spirit, guide my wandering heart;  
Though but an atom 'midst immensity,  
Still, I am something fashioned by Thy hand;  
I hold a middle rank, 'twixt Heaven and Earth,  
On the last verge of mortal being stand  
Close to the realms where angels have their birth,  
Just on the boundaries of the spirit land!

The chain of being is complete in me;  
In me is matter's last gradation lost,  
And the next step is Spirit-Deity!  
I can command the lightning, and am dust;  
A monarch and a slave; a worm, a god.  
Whence came I here and how? So marvelously  
Constructed and conceived—unknown. This clod  
Lives surely through some higher energy;  
For from itself alone it could not be.

Creator! Yes! Thy wisdom and Thy word  
Created me! Thou source of life and good;  
Thou spirit of my spirit, and my Lord;  
Thy light, Thy love, in the bright plenitude,  
Filled me with an immortal soul to spring  
Over the abyss of Death, and bade it wear  
The garments of eternal day, and wing  
Its heavenly flight beyond this little sphere,  
Even to its source—to Thee, its Author—there.

O thought ineffable! O visions blest!  
(Though worthless our conceptions all of Thee.)  
Yet shall Thy shadowed image fill my breast,  
And waft its homage to Thy Deity.  
God! thus alone my lonely thoughts can soar;  
Thus seek Thy presence, Being wise and good!  
'Midst Thy vast works, admire, obey, adore,  
And when the tongue is eloquent no more,  
The soul shall speak in tears of gratitude.

## The King's Funeral

YESTERDAY the ashes of Great Britain's late king were given sepulcher. The ceremonies were conducted with all the solemn pomp that the invention of centuries has been able to make them, but underneath all the display there was the real grief of a sorrowing people, for the British nation sincerely loved their late king. That he was not above some human frailties, did not lessen, but rather intensified their affection for him, for they held that his very frailties were a proof of the warmth of his heart. Then he was in full sympathy with all that Englishmen hold as a man's part in the world. He was with them in their church; in the opening of their schools and hospitals; he went hunting and competed in their races; and though he did not reach the throne until late in life, he was a real king when he did, and all the wise men of his country and of foreign countries who watched his work, agree that he steadied the state with a master hand.

So his death brought more sorrow to his people than the death of any preceding sovereign of his country ever did.

They look back along the list from the first one who wore the crown down, and he holds first place in their hearts, at least the first place excepting his royal mother, and we doubt if she was as near the hearts of all her people as was her son. She had the deep respect of her people, her son won their love, and his funeral was not a cold following of ceremonials, rather the casket that held his crumbling dust had the benediction of people's tears.